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# WAR POEMS

*from The Yale Review*

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS

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NEW HAVEN, CONN., U. S. A.

# WAR POEMS
## *from The Yale Review*

REPRINTS FROM THE
YALE REVIEW

*A Book of Yale Review Verse,*
1917

*War Poems from The Yale Review,*
1918

# WAR POEMS

## *from The Yale Review*

WITH A FOREWORD BY
THE EDITORS

NEW HAVEN
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# FOREWORD



THOUGH it is still too early to say what goal of permanent art the verse inspired by the Great War will eventually reach, it is already possible to see the direction in which it is moving. Certain distinctive and dynamic values have unmistakably appeared—values which set the characteristic war poetry of our day in marked contrast with that of the past, and with what we know of the curiously archaic expression of modern Germany. Our own product, which this little collection from the work of a score of British and American writers may illustrate, is almost strangely free from the mood of the older war minstrels. Our poets to-day are seldom tempted by the pomp and circumstance of armies. They indulge in very little glorification of the sheer joy of combat, the hot hatreds and bloody vengeance of battle. The war is seen by them rather as a new atonement than as a mighty drama of arms; and its heroes for them are the men, the women, the children, who have suffered to the uttermost for the redemption of the world. The overwhelming grief; the superhuman endurance; the poignant and triumphant dignity of death; the terrible losses, the spiritual reparations—these are the themes that our war poets have made peculiarly their own. It is as if they were con-

strained by that warning uttered out of the fulness of the wisdom of peace—

> The tumult and the shouting dies;
> The captains and the kings depart:
> Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
> An humble and a contrite heart.

But for all the tragedy and pathos, there is no weak lament, no vain longing for the peace that is gone. Never in history have war poets been so preoccupied with the greatness of their cause. The beauty of the ideal towards which humanity to-day is struggling through blood, touches and consecrates their art.

THE EDITORS.

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# WAR POEMS

## *from The Yale Review*

## ALFRED NOYES

### THE UNION

YOU that have gathered together the sons of all races,
And welded them into one,
Lifting the torch of your Freedom on hungering faces
That sailed to the setting sun;

You that have made of mankind in your own proud regions
The music of man to be,
How should the old earth sing of you, now, as your legions
Rise to set all men free?

How should the singer that knew the proud vision and loved it,
In the days when not all men knew,
Gaze, through his tears, on the light, now the world has approved it;
Or dream, when the dream comes true?

How should he sing when the Spirit of Freedom in thunder
Speaks, and the wine-press is red;
And the sea-winds are loud with the chains that are broken asunder
And nations that rise from the dead?

Flag of the sky, proud flag of that wide communion,
Too mighty for thought to scan;
Flag of the many in one, and that last world-union
That kingdom of God in man;

Ours was a dream, in the night, of that last federation,
But yours is the glory unfurled,—
The marshalled nations and stars that shall make one nation
One singing star of the world.

## JOHN ERSKINE

## IMPRESSIONS AT THE FRONT

### I

IS this the front—this level sweep of life,
This pageant without pulse of haste or fear?
Can this calm exercise be mortal strife?
Is the last reach of passion measured here?
We looked for angry blade and poisonous breath
Striking the floor of judgment, flail and fan;
Here lurked, we thought, crude agonies of death—
But here, in one wide dignity, is man.

Others behind the conflict, safe and far,
Still wage with lips their travesty of war;
We catch the rumor when the cannon cease.
Here at the front, when most the cannon rage,
The dream-touched actors on this mighty stage
In silence play their parts, and seem at peace.

### II

Framed in with battle, this weird pantomime,
This dignity of action, conjures up
Shades of old heroes—Lancelot in his prime,
Galahad, questing for the holy cup,
Beautiful Hector marching to his fate,
Tristram and Palimedes, rivals twain,

And Roland sounding his proud horn too late—
These quiet actors play these parts again.

And in the lull the critics far away,
Who have not seen, nor ever read, this play,
Who cannot act, who never trod the stage—
Their quarrel mingles with the threatening cry
Of the scene-shifters watching Roland die,
Who seize the moment for a better wage.

III

If this world be a stage, what hours we give
To tedious make-up in the tiring room;
How simply comes at last our cue to live,
How, ere we know it, we enact our doom!
The wisdom that impels us to the play
Is patient with us while we choose our parts,
But without warning sounds our judgment day;
The curtain rises—life, the drama, starts.

How late it starts! Ere this grim curtain rose,
How long we practised attitude and pose,
Disguise of accent, costume, mood, or mind!
Yet in this inventory of our art,
Living at last, we play our naked heart;
How brief a reckoning counts us with our kind!

IV

If character be fate, no need to ask
Who set the stage, who cast you for the rôle;

Put on what man you are, put off the mask,
Put on the tragic pattern of your soul.
At last be true; no gesture now let spring
But from supreme sincerity of art;
Let him who plays the monarch be a king,
Who plays the rogue, be perfect in his part.

So when this hour had rung, the scene began.
One played the rash, one played the patient man,
And one, the hero, drew the dragon's fangs;
One heard death's bugler calling, and obeyed;
And one, a rose-cheeked boy, the martyr played;
One played the traitor well—see where he hangs.

V

We may yet play more rôles than we believed,
Since to himself at last each man is known,
Since now the actor studies undeceived
The part he learned, and lived, and has outgrown.
And those, the few and flawless, the sublime
Whose poignance of perfection strikes us dumb—
Even for themselves, in the surprise of the time,
Doubt not another reckoning will come.

"Comrades, we shall rehearse more wisely—yea,
There shall be nobler persons in our play,
We shall rebuild the plot on kindlier laws."
So at the front they act, and see, and ponder,
And win, with simple gratitude and wonder,
Peace in themselves, which is their sole applause.

## ROBERT FROST



## NOT TO KEEP

THEY sent him back to her. The letter came
Saying . . . and she could have him. And before
She could be sure there was no hidden ill
Under the formal writing, he was in her sight—
Living.—They gave him back to her alive—
How else? They are not known to send the dead—
And not disfigured visibly. His face?—
His hands? She had to look—to ask
"What was it, dear?" And she had given all
And still she had all—*they* had—they the lucky!
Wasn't she glad now? Everything seemed won,
And all the rest for them permissible ease.
She had to ask "What was it, dear?"
"Enough,
Yet not enough. A bullet through and through,
High in the breast. Nothing but what good care
And medicine and rest—and you a week,
Can cure me of to go again." The same
Grim giving to do over for them both.
She dared no more than ask him with her eyes
How was it with him for a second trial.
And with his eyes he asked her not to ask.
They had given him back to her, but not to keep.

## JOHN FINLEY

## THE VALLEYS OF THE BLUE SHROUDS

(Where the valiant *poilus* were buried in their blue uniforms)

O SHARDS of walls that once held precious life,
Now scattered, like the bones the Prophet saw
Lying in visioned valley of the slain
Ere One cried: "Son of Man, can these bones live?"

O images of heroes, saints, and Christs,
Pierced, broken, thrust in hurried sepulture
In selfsame tombs with tinsel, dross, and dreg,
And without time for either shrift or shroud!

O smould'ring embers of Love's hearthstone fires,
Quenched by the fiercer fires of hellish hate,
That have not where to kindle flames again
To light succeeding generations on!

O ghost-gray ashes of cathedral towers
That toward the sky once raised appealing hands
To beg the God of all take residence within
And hold communion with the kneeling souls!

O silent tongues of bells that once did ring
Matin and Angelus o'er peaceful fields,

Now shapeless slag that will to-morrow serve
To make new engines for still others' woe!

O dust that flowered in finial and foil
And bright in many-petaled windows bloomed,
Now unto dust returned at cannon's breath
To lay thy faded glories on the crypt!

The cirrus dawns in Parsee tapestries
With azure broiderings will clothe your walls;
The nimbus noons will shower golden rain
And sunset colors fill each Gothic arch;

For o'er thy stricken vales, O valiant France,
Our love for thee shall prophesy anew,
And Heav'n's Four Winds of Liberty, allied,
Shall breathe unpoisoned in thy streets till they
Shall pulse again with life that laughs and sings,
And yet remembers, singing through its tears
The music of an everlasting song—
Remembers, proudly and undyingly,
*The hero dust that lies in shrouds of blue*
*But rises as thy soul, immortal France!*

## JOHN MASEFIELD

### THE WILL TO PERFECTION

O WRETCHED man, that, for a little mile
Crawls beneath Heaven for his brother's blood,
Whose days the planets number with their style,
To whom all earth is slave, all living, food;

O withering man, within whose folded shell
Lies yet the seed, the spirit's quickening corn,
That Time and Sun will change out of the cell
Into green meadows, in the world unborn;

If Beauty be a dream, do but resolve
And fire shall come, that in the stubborn clay
Works to make perfect till the rocks dissolve,
The barriers burst and beauty takes her way,

Beauty herself, within whose blossoming Spring
Even wretched man shall clap his hands and sing.

## EMILE CAMMAERTS



# MÉDITATION SUR LA NUIT DU TROIS AOÛT

## (1914-1917)

(Translation by Madame Cammaerts)

—Que faites-vous assis, la tête dans votre manteau?
—Que faites-vous accroupis, le menton dans la main?
—Que faites-vous couchés, les yeux levés vers le ciel?
—Nous attendons que le soleil se lève sur les eaux.
—Et qu'à la veille succède le lendemain.
—Nous attendons que les morts se réveillent.

Les soldats montent la garde autour du tombeau.
Ils ont roulé la pierre, ils ont posé les sceaux.
Dans la nuit étoilée brillent leurs baïonettes
Et ils portent des casques à pointe sur la tête.
Ils parlent une langue que nous n'entendons pas,
Une langue précise et lourde comme leurs pas.
Même au seuil du tombeau, ils ne baissent pas la voix.
Et ils trébuchent en jurant sur les croix. . . .

Que manque-t-il, mon pays, à ta Passion?
N'as-tu pas eu ton agonie dans le Jardin?
N'as-tu pas dû subir les caresses de Judas,
En cette nuit d'août où la trahison

Te baisait la joue en te tordant la main?
N'as-tu pas dû, comme Jésus, faire ton choix?

Que manque-t-il, mon pays, à ton Calvaire?
N'es-tu pas tombé trois fois sous la croix,
A Liége, à Namur, à Anvers?
T'ont-ils épargné leurs injures, leurs crachats,
Leurs railleries et leurs coups?
N'as-tu pas saigné sous la couronne d'épines?
N'as-tu pas senti s'enfoncer les clous:
Dinant, Termonde, Andenne, Tamines?
N'as-tu pas demandé à boire
Et goûte le fiel de l'éponge dérisoire
Tandis que tes bourreaux, à tes pieds,
Se disputaient ta robe à coups de dés?
N'as-tu pas eu faim et soif de Justice?
N'as-tu pas mangé le pain de la captivité?
N'as-tu pas bu jusqu'à la lie le calice
De l'esclavage et de l'iniquité?

Pourtant la terre n'a pas célébré ton deuil,
Les cieux ne se sont pas obscurcis,
Tu n'as pas eu de mains amies
Pour te coucher dans ton cercueil.
Voilà non trois jours mais trois ans que tu tombas,
Comme un fruit trop mûr, dans ton tombeau.
Trois ans qu'ils ont roulé la pierre et posé les sceaux
Et les morts ne se réveillent toujours pas. . . .

—Que faites-vous assis, la tête dans votre manteau?
—Que faites-vous couchés, les yeux levés vers le ciel?

—Que faites-vous accroupis, le menton dans la main?
—Nous entendons les moissonneurs qui aiguisent leurs faux.
—Nous humons les parfums des prairies maternelles.
—Nous regardons pâlir l'étoile du matin.

---

—What are you doing seated there, with your head wrapped in your cloak?
—What are you doing crouched there, with your chin upon your hand?
—What are you doing lying there, with your eyes fixed on the sky?.
—We are waiting for the sun to rise upon the waters.
—And for the morn to follow on the night.
—We are waiting for the dead to awake. . . .

The soldiers are watching around the tomb,
They have rolled the stone in place, they have set the seals.
In the starry night their bayonets gleam,
They are wearing pointed helmets on their heads.
They speak a speech we do not understand,
A language harsh and heavy as their steps.
By the very grave, they lower not their voices,
And they stumble on the crosses and they curse.

What is lacking, O my Country, to thy Passion?
Hast thou not had thine agony in the Garden?
Wast thou not forced to take Judas kisses,

That night in August when treason
Kissed thy cheek and wrung thy hand?
Didst thou not, like Jesus, have to make thy choice?

What is lacking, O my Country, to thy Calvary?
Didst thou not fall three times beneath the cross—
At Liége, at Namur, and at Antwerp?
Wert thou spared their spitting and their insults,
Their mockeries and their blows?
Didst thou not bleed beneath a crown of thorns?
Didst thou not feel the nails pierce thy flesh—
Dinant, Termonde, Andenne, Tamines?
Didst thou not ask to drink, and taste
The gall on mocking sponge,
While underneath thee, at thy feet,
The soldiers cast upon thy vestures lots?
Didst thou not for Justice thirst and hunger?
Didst thou not eat the captive's bitter bread?
Didst thou not drink unto the very dregs
The cruel cup of shame and slavery?

And yet the earth did not join in thy mourning,
The heavens were not overcast and black,
No loving hands were near to lay thee
Tenderly in thy tomb.
And now, not three days but three years have passed
Since thou fellst, like too ripe fruit, into thy grave,
Since they rolled the stone in place and set the seals,
And still the dead have not arisen again. . . .

—What are you doing seated there, with your head wrapped in your cloak?

—What are you doing lying there, with your eyes fixed on the sky?

—What are you doing crouched there, with your chin upon your hand?

—We are listening to the reapers sharpening their scythes.

—We are breathing in the perfume of our country's fields.

—We are watching the paling of the morning star.

## KATHARINE LEE BATES

## THE NEW ILIAD

SO young, with bright tossed hair and eager eyes,
The curves and tints of boyhood on a face
More fit for mother-kiss than powder-stain,
Wearing his khaki like a brief disguise
Donned by a student, on our dusty train
He sat for hours unmoving in his place.

That slender presence, sacrificial, fair,
Drew many glances, though, New England bred,
One word of all our love we could not speak.
We only watched him as he nestled there
Against the window, with the page of Greek
Open beneath his hand, unturned, unread.

His blue eyes conned a mightier Iliad.
Those beehive wars of one wife-stealing clan
Against another on a windy spur
Of Asia Minor faded from the lad
Fronting that most tremendous massacre
E'er staged by Time, well-skilled tragedian.

Where ravening, savage Might, the Antichrist,
Gigantic onset makes against the line
That holds for Freedom, Honor, Pity, all

Those slow-won sanctities whose worth is priced
Above the utmost cost of blood. Appal
Though such cost may, we yield not our Divine.

But what new Homer, in what land awaking,
Shall chant this war, its crashing battle-waves,
Its flying duels mirrored from above
Within the rainbow, fatal thunders breaking
In ocean's purple depth, the borders of
Wide countries wrought in armies and in graves?

Down thirty centuries Helen's face has shone
By magic of a blind old bard. Thy soul,
Edith Cavell, shall not its beauty find
Remembrance? Is the fame by Hector won
To lord it still, while dust upon the wind
Are the brave deeds that crowd our daily scroll?

With bright tossed hair and eager eyes, the lad,
Still as a statue of immortal youth,
Leaned to his window, heedless of the Greek,
Already in that greater Iliad
Striking his blow. The love we could not speak
Encompassed him in looks of pride and ruth.

## JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

### A NEW HEAVEN

WE have our hopes and fears that flout us,
We have our illusions, changeless through the years;
We have our dreams of rest after long struggle,
After our toil is finished, folded hands.
But for those who have fallen in battle,
What Heaven can there be?

Heaven is full of those who can remember
The ebbing-out of life that slowly lingered
At the dark doors of pain;
Heaven is full of those who dropped their burden
At last through weariness;
But these the War has taken
Remember naught but their own exultant youth
Filling their hearts with unaccomplished dreams:
The trumpet-call—then the swift searing darkness
Stilling the proud sad song.

How will these enter in
Our old dull Heaven?
Where we seek only to drowse at ease, unthinking,
Since we are safe at last.

Safe? For these souls who faced a thousand dangers,
And found sly Death that robbed them of their chance,
Ere it befell?
Safe—can a Heaven which is safe and painless,
Ever be Heaven to them?

Somewhere amid the clouds there is the home of thunder;
Thunder is naught to them,
It is a ball, a heavy plaything
They may kick hither and thither with their feet.
Lightning is but a toy—the flaming stars
Are endless camp-fire lights;
And for the silence of eternity,
They too on out-post duty, often heard it speak.

We have the dreams of our fat lives that lead us
To waste our lives;
We have the false hope we are serving others
When it is but ourselves we serve;
Yet for these who have never lived, and whose sole service
Was but to die too soon,
Perhaps somewhere they are making a new Heaven
Filled with the divine despair and joy this dead earth
never knew.

## KARLE WILSON BAKER

## EAGLE YOUTH

(1918)

THEY have taken his horse and plume,
They have left him to plod, and fume
For a hero's scope and room!
They have curbed his fighting pride,
They have bade him burrow and hide
With a million, side by side:
Look—into the air he springs,
Fighting with wings!

He has found a way to be free
Of that dun immensity
That would swallow up such as he:
Who would burrow when he could fly?
He will climb up into the sky
And the world shall watch him die!
Only his peers may dare
Follow him there!

## LOUIS UNTERMEYER



## JERUSALEM DELIVERED

I BOUGHT my paper at the crowded corner
And almost shouted as I read the news:
*"Jerusalem Taken—Freedom For The Jews."*
Here was a line to answer friend and scorner,
A triumph for the just, a proof that Time,
So negligent of the affairs of men,
Had turned and given us our own at last.
And then
He stumbled past—
A cross between a monarch and a mourner,
Dark-eyed and dismal, but with a sublime
Assurance in his face.
A pride of race
Endowed him with an insolent sort of grace,
Something at once rebellious and resigned;
A dignity that shamed the yoke,
A warmth that called and clasped me to my kind.
And then he spoke:
"What should we want with Zion now, we Jews
With iron in our souls, with brain and thews
Hardened by hammering epochs; we who made
Majestic dictates that have swayed
And outlived conquering empires; we

In whom a fresh and fiery energy
Has blossomed into psalms and saviors; turned
A savage tribe to kings and priests that burned
To set a whole world free.
Dreamers that rose against the darkening hordes;
Poets in armor; prophets bearing swords—
We who have lived, triumphant in defeat,
Spurring a lagging world, shall we now meet
To find the softest path, the easiest road,
And run, rejoicing, to a snug retreat?
What trade have we with comfort well-bestowed
Who are the world's uncomfortable goad?
Sorrow has been our quickening bread, and pain
The healing wine that made us strong again.
A race of exiled shepherds without a fold,
We sought new flocks and stopped to weep
Over a hundred homes we could not keep,
Gathering for others what they could not hold.

*By the waters of Babylon*
*We sat down and wept;*
*Upon the comfortless willows*
*We hung our harps.*
*A kingdom of priests and a holy nation,*
*We were nourished on hate.*
*Lifting our eyes to the hills*
*We praised all goodness and drank*
*Poison and prejudice,*
*Bigotry and death. . . .*
*So we went forth—*

*Outcast, defrauded, maligned—*
*Sowing the world with faith;*
*Kindling the earth with a dream.*

Kindling the earth with a dream, we spread our seed,
Warriors and wise men rising from our bones.
Summoning Maccabeus in our need,
Judas the Hammer sprang up from the stones.
We struck with him for nothing but a screed;
Assembling all the scattered tones
And fragments of the Law, we fought and freed
The unborn Western world. We challenged Rome
Upon the blood-soaked ruins of our home;
And from Barkochba's smouldering defeat
We gathered strength to stand against the flood
Of lies and inquisitions, greed and blood,
When chivalry became a pious cheat.
We lived to think and suffer while the fires
Of hate beat over us at every step;
While the crusaders raged with bloody feet
And Murder, to the tune of *'Hep! Hep! Hep!'*
Danced at our doors or swaggered down the street.
The night hears voices death could never kill
In Trèves and Strasburg, Worms, Cologne, and Spires.
Our ghosts still cry in York and in Seville;
The walls of Kishinev are never still.
There was but one escape for us at last—
To turn to lusty legends like a blast
Of heartening trumpets, wring new life from these,

Facing dark futures with our fiery past;
Or heal ourselves in orient imageries.

*In Paradise*
*There are eighty myriads of trees.*
*The meanest among them is taller*
*Than the cedars of Lebanon*
*And richer than clusters of camphire in the vineyards*
*of En-gedi.*
*In every corner*
*There are sixty myriads of angels,*
*Bright as the grains of a silver pomegranate*
*Upon which fall the rays of the moon.*
*The Tree of Life stands in the very centre*
*And shades the whole of the heavens.*
*It has fifteen thousand tastes*
*And the perfumes thereof vary likewise.*
*Over it hang seven clouds of glory;*
*Wild beasts are friendly beneath it,*
*And winds sing in its branches forever.*
*And we shall inherit it.*
*We shall dwell in the fifth of the heavens*
*That is built of raw silver with a wainscot of gold.*
*The canopies are all of stars*
*And the coverlets of the jewelled beds*
*Are purple and blue silks*
*Woven by Eve herself.*
*We shall lie softly there*
*And see the sun come from his chamber like a bride-*
*groom,*

*Or like a strong man about to run a race.*
*We shall watch him rise in the morning,*
*Fresh from his bath of flame,*
*The brightness dripping from his hair,*
*Scattering drops of daylight through the skies.*
*We shall talk with Elijah.*
*And every Monday and Thursday, on Sabbaths and holidays,*
*The Patriarchs shall walk with us*
*And the twelve sons of Jacob,*
*And Moses and David and all the kings of Israel*
*Shall pass with the Messiah.*
*The gates of carbuncle shall lift their heads,*
*The rocks shall clap their hands,*
*Forgotten crannies of the earth be green pavilions*
*And dusty crevices shall bloom with laughter!*

So we have flourished, fed on dreams and doubt,
God-makers and god-breakers, lashing out
With Job-like questioning at God and death
And answering ourselves in that same breath.
An angry blaze, a scornful thundering
At all things, and a faith in everything.
A fire that swept through Joshua and came
To white perfection in Spinoza's flame;
That lit Lassalle's and Heine's ironies
And shone in quiet radiance from the lives
Of Ibn Ezra to Maimonides.
The light that, often dimmed, persists and strives
Through all of us from Mendelssohn to Marx;

The brand of which they all were scattering sparks—
Hillel and Jesus—even so are we.
A race that burns, an ever fiery sword
To rescue tolerance and set freedom free—
This is our mission, let us never cast
Away our boldness which hath great reward. . . .

Into the world then, let us bear this light
Not skulk back home with it, but swing the bright
Brand into musty corners. Let the flame
Beat on all smug deceit and placid shame;
Turning our backs on softness, we shall go,
Making fresh fires and stronger beacons burn
There where the fight is darkest. Let us turn
Like a new army risen from its dreams,
To sterner measures, universal schemes
Wherever something struggles, climbs, or delves.
So let us rise above the past we know
And be a light not only to ourselves.

*Out of unburied ages came a voice:*
*'Listen, O isles, unto me*
*And hearken, ye people, from afar.*
*The Lord hath called me and said,*
*Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I am glorified!*
*Yet it is too small a thing that thou shouldst be my servant*
*To raise up only the tribes of Jacob*
*And to restore the preserved of Israel:*
*No—I will also give thee*

*For a light to the Gentiles,*
*As a beacon to all men,*
*That my desire and thy mission reach*
*Unto the ends and stretches of the world.'* "

He stopped.
The gray dusk dropped its thin disguise
A moment only, and the crowd surged on.
A newsboy shrieked the news again and hopped
Between us as I sought the old man's eyes,
So wise, benevolent, and wan;
Less of a mystery than a shining clue.
I turned to ask—something I think I knew
But never can be sure of.
He was gone.

## IRENE McLEOD

### THE ABSENT LOVER

SPRING is gone, and summer's here,
They're bringing up the hay,
Soon they will be harvesting,
And my love's still away.
I see the apples reddening,
And yellow burns the wheat,
Lovers sit in summer's heart,
And sing to summer's beat.
But my love's still away!

He lies there, he cries there,
I hear him night and day;
I cannot hear the birds sing,
For my love's still away.
I'll not go through the clover field,
Along to Foxglove wood,
Nor climb the ash on Chapel hill
We climbed in happier mood.
For my love's still away!

We hated never man nor beast,
Our hearts were pure and gay,
We worshipped love in gentleness,
Yet they took my love away.

They sent my love a-butchering
Other women's dears,
And oh, the cries of women's hearts
Ring tolling in my ears.
  They took our loves away!

O summer lanes, O summer fields
That smell so sweet of hay,
When this is done, and Truth is won—
Though my love's still away—
May happier lovers love here
Where I so lonely tread,
And build thy shining city, Love,
Over our darling dead. . . .
  Though my love's still away!

## MISSING

I KNEW by their eyes when they came,
Lips locked on a word unsaid,
Hands gentle as pity, or death. . . .
It was I who cried out on your name;
Life paused on a breath. . . .
Missing! Hope sprang like a flame!
Not dead! O my love . . . not dead?

## GRACE HAZARD CONKLING

## TO FRANCIS LEDWIDGE

KILLED IN FRANCE, JULY 31, 1917.

"Shall I meet Keats in some wild isle of balm
Dreaming beside a tarn?"

*—Francis Ledwidge.*

LOVER of the lane-rose, of rainy trees,
And speech of corn and wind upon the hill,
Voice of the deep fields, high priest of the bees
When summer whispers all you say she will,
Beside what crystal water poised and still
Have you bewitched his dreams with news of these
And of his nightingale, talking until
The wild isle listens and the fairy seas?
But if as far as this, dark rumor flies,
And he should ask of England and of France,
Graving the dear-bought wisdom of your eyes,
Oh give him comfort! Tell him they still advance,
Those grim and glorious men who mean to free
Your Flanders grave, and his in Italy!

## HENRY HEAD



## DIED OF HIS WOUNDS

DEATH set his mark and left a mangled thing,
With palsied limbs no science could restore,
To weary out the weeks or months or years,
Amidst the tumult of a mother's tears,
Behind the sick-room door,
Where tender skill and subtle knowledge bring
Brief respite only from the ultimate
Decree of fate.

Then, like the flowers we planted in his room,
Bud after bud we watched his soul unfold;
Each delicate bloom
Of alabaster, violet, and gold
Struggled to light,
Drawing its vital breath
Within the pallid atmosphere of death.

That valiant spirit has not passed away,
But lives and grows
Within us, as a penetrating ray
Of sunshine on a crystal surface glows
With many-hued refraction. He has fled
Into the unknown silence of the night,
But cannot die until human hearts are dead.

## LEE WILSON DODD

### THE PARTING

MUSE, we have rhymed of Liberty,
Have damned the Germans, cheered for France,
Exalted Belgium's constancy—
Bowed to the times and circumstance:
But have we given of our best?
Have we not drawn from brackish springs
Dead water? Have we stood the test,
The test that Life, Life only, brings?
Reflected from her eyes, they fade,
Those rhymes of ours; they thin and are
As if they never had been made.
Poor Muse! and must the blight of war
Destroy in us the seeds of song,
Leave us no hope for flower or fruit?
Must all that touches war go wrong,
Leaf-withered, blasted at the root?
Not all. But, Muse of mine, our hearts
Have not the mighty pulse that shakes
The soul of nations. Song departs
From us, when all we sang of breaks
From all we hoped for—peace on earth,
Good will to men of kindly will,

Beauty. . . . But what is beauty worth
In a crazed world where man must kill
Man, to make Truth come true? Poor Muse,
Bewildered Muse of mine, farewell!
Find thou some Heaven apart! I choose
To labor, not to sing, in Hell.

## ROBERT MUNGER

### THE SLEEPERS

YOU sleep so sound beneath the earth,
You have no care for any birth
Of star or flower or foaming swing
Of ocean or resurgent spring.

You do not hear within the night
One faintest sound of old delight,
Nor any cry where tumult pours
Nor the loud drumming of the wars.

How countless ones, like me who fare,
Have turned to you their solemn care,
Have said like me, in whispers deep,
"How still they lie, how sound they sleep."

And I—I could not wish that you
Should walk this bruisèd earth anew,
That you should forfeit all your gain
Of silence and your slumber fain.

But I could wish that there might be
One moment for your eyes to see
The holy flame upon the ways
Beyond these reincarnate days.

That, for your proud rest, you might know
Where France's bleeding lilies blow,
What death they died, what birth they found
Who join you now beneath the ground.

## ALICE CORBIN



## A LITANY IN THE DESERT

### I

ON the other side of the Sangre de Cristo mountains there is a great welter of steel and flame. I have read that it is so. I know nothing of it here.

On the other side of the water there is terrible carnage. I have read that it is so. I know nothing of it here.

I do not know why men fight and die. I do not know why men sweat and slave. I know nothing of it here.

### II

Out of the peace of your great valleys, America, out of the depth and silence of your deep canyons,

Out of the wide stretch of yellow cornfields, out of the stealthy sweep of your rich prairies,

Out of the high mountain peaks, out of the intense purity of your snows,

Invigorate us, O America.

Out of the deep peace of your breast, out of the sure strength of your loins,

Recreate us, O America.

Not from the smoke and the fever and fret, not from the welter of furnaces, from the fierce melting-pot of cities;

But from the quiet fields, from the little places, from the dark lamp-lit nights—from the plains, from the cabins, from the little house in the mountains,

Breathe strength upon us:

And give us the young men who will make us great.

## W. M. LETTS

### THE CONNAUGHT RANGERS

I SAW the Connaught Rangers when they were passing by,
On a spring day, a good day, with gold rifts in the sky.
Themselves were marching steadily along the Liffey quay
An' I see the young proud look of them as if it was to-day!
The bright lads, the right lads, I have them in my mind,
With the green flags on their bayonets all fluttering in the wind!

A last look at old Ireland, a last good-bye maybe,
Then the gray sea, the wide sea, my grief upon the sea!
And when will they come home, says I, when will they see once more
The dear blue hills of Wicklow and Wexford's dim gray shore?
The brave lads of Ireland, no better lads you'll find,
With the green flags on their bayonets all fluttering in the wind!

Three years have passed since that spring day, sad years for them and me.
Green graves there are in Serbia and in Gallipoli.
And many who went by that day along the muddy street
Will never hear the roadway ring to their triumphant feet.

But when they march before Him, God's welcome will be kind,
And the green flags on their bayonets will flutter in the wind.

## THE ROAD THAT GOES WEST

"And when the world is hushed and the fever of life over and our work done, then in thy mercy give us a safe lodging and a quiet rest."—Prayer.

WHEN from this war my way lies to the west,
Footsore and muddy, wounded, shattered, spent,
Death being past I shall but crave a rest,
A kindly hostel, welcome and content.

Some hope for golden streets and gates of pearl
And some for haloes and a sea of glass,
May God forgive me for a thankless churl—
I'd rather have one field of daisied grass.

I am too battle-stained for mansions fine,
Too tired for the flutes and minstrelsy.
A Paradise remote and green be mine,
An English Heaven were good enough for me.

I'd choose to reach it when the evening sun
Sends level beams among the elm tree boles,
When rooks and daws fly home and labor's done,
And all the wayside flowers wear aureoles.

Later an English twilight sweet with stocks,
A flittering of bats against the sky,
Dim orchard grass where dandelion clocks
Tell fairy time to elves who wander by,

Gnarled boughs beneath the casement of my room,
That white still room set far from strife and fear;
The church owl hooting in his hallowed gloom,
A sound of hurried waters at the weir;

The house all hushed save when the night winds stir
The cluster roses nodding at the pane,
Or drowsy moths set soft gray wings a-whirr
About the walls, then sink to rest again.

How good to lie and dream with fast-shut eyes,
Of every care and baulked desire bereft;
To take no heed of punishment or prize
Or that bewildered toil-worn life I'd left.

Who knows, the Master of the house might stand
At rising of the moon beside my bed
And say, "Sleep on, sleep on," and lay His hand,
In benediction on my weary head.

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